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AUTHOR Stark, Joan S.; Lowther, Malcolm A.
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ABSTRACT

Faculty in 10 professional programs at the undergraduate and master's levels were surveyed in 1985 to determine their views concerning influences and outcomes for the programs. The survey, which was undertaken as part of the University of Michigan's Professional Preparation Project, received responses from 2,230 faculty from 732 programs in 346 different colleges. The framework of the survey included several types of influences on professional preparation that may affect educational programs: external influences (from society or the professional community), those from within the university but from outside the professional program, and internal influences. Findings include: faculty in nursing, education, social work, library science, and journalism perceived much less support from society than did faculty in architecture, business, engineering, law, and pharmacy; faculty in different professional fields also reported differences in influence exercised by their professional community, primarily through the accrediting agency. Information was also obtained on the roles preferred by faculty (e.g., administrative, teaching, scholarship). Faculty also responded to statements about the outcomes a professional program graduate should achieve. Eleven potential outcomes were identified and classified as professional competencies and professional attitudes. (SW)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

of

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION STUDY PROJECT SURVEY

conducted by:

JOAN S. STARK, PROJECT DIRECTOR

MALCOLM A. LOWTHER, PROJECT CO-DIRECTOR

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

2002 SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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The Professional Preparation Project
The University of Michigan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, more than half of the nation's undergraduate students are enrolled in programs which prepare them for professional occupations. Many graduate students also pursue professional study in fields such as law, social work and library science. As a result, students in professional programs now outnumber those pursuing studies in liberal arts. What implications for higher education accompany these enrollment patterns?

The answer is not obvious. In fact, because of the diversity among professional programs and because professional educators often do not communicate beyond their own field, preparation for professions is not well understood even within universities. Decision-makers may lack comparative information about the objectives of different professional fields and about the varied influences acting upon them.

Three current questions require better understanding of professional programs.

* **Is professional study appropriate for undergraduates?** A 1984 report, Involvement in Learning, concluded that professional study is excessively narrow and specialized. The authors of the 1985 report, Integrity in the College Curriculum, believed that professional study, appropriately organized and taught, can achieve the same ends as liberal education. These contradictory assertions are based on scanty evidence about the actual objectives and achievements of professional programs.

* **What are the proper criteria for program review and resource allocation within universities?** Because little comparative research has been conducted, decision-makers may inappropriately apply the same criteria to very different programs.

* **What do faculty expect of students in specific professional programs?** Increasingly, researchers report that, especially in large universities, learning environments for students may depend upon the curriculum chosen. But there is little information about the nature of the distinct sub-environments in different professional fields.

The Professional Preparation Project hopes to improve understanding of diverse professional programs in colleges and universities by: 1) providing information about the educational goals of different professional fields and the specific influences that affect them; 2) assisting in the cross-fertilization of instructional ideas among professional programs; and , 3) exploring criteria for measuring student outcomes and for making institutional decisions about professional programs.

The project's primary audiences are faculty members, administrators, professional organizations and policy makers. All of these groups are concerned with improving institutional programs, conserving resources and demonstrating accountability. Some may be attempting, as well, to integrate liberal and professional study and to devise collaborative instructional methods.

As an early task, the project surveyed faculty members in ten professional programs to learn how they view a common set of influence factors and educational outcomes. The ten professional programs, selected because they are found in diverse types of colleges, included: architecture, business administration (undergraduate programs), teacher education, engineering, journalism, law, library science (master's programs), nursing, pharmacy and social work (undergraduate and master's programs). The survey explored the possibility that each major professional program has a unique "professional preparation environment" characterized not only by its professional subject matter but by both the influences which affect it and the attention which faculty devote to various educational objectives.

Surveys were sent during 1985 to 1,046 programs in the ten fields and were completed by deans or department chairs and by faculty knowledgeable about the "pre-service" professional preparation program. Responses were received from 69.8% of the programs to which surveys were sent -- a total of 2,230 faculty from 732 programs in 346 different colleges responded.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Faculty in the ten professional fields perceived the environments in which their programs exist differently. The most obvious difference was in their perceptions of the extent to which society supports and rewards their programs and graduates. Faculty in nursing, education, social work, library science and journalism perceived much less support from society than did faculty members in architecture, business, engineering, law and pharmacy. These perceptions of societal support were consistent regardless of the type of institution in which faculty respondents taught -- ranging from large public research universities to small independent colleges.

2. Faculty in different professional fields also reported differences in influence exercised by their professional community, primarily through the accrediting agency. The influences attributed to the professional community were much less distinctive than those due to societal influences.

3. Faculty perceptions of influences within their colleges and universities minimally distinguished the ten professional programs. In general, faculty in most professional fields believed their institutions were supportive.

4. When asked to indicate the extent to which each of eleven broad educational outcomes should be emphasized for their graduates, professional field faculty members rated all the outcomes as very important. In general, however, they believed it slightly more important that graduates possess professional "competences" than that they exhibit professional "attitudes".

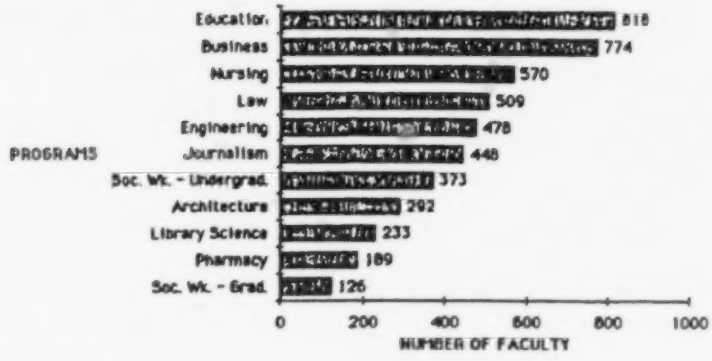
5. Based upon the emphasis faculty believed should be placed on different outcomes, professional programs could be grouped according to their educational ideologies. One group, comprised of faculty from social work, nursing and education, held a common view that

developing professional identity and achieving technical competence deserved strong emphasis along with other outcomes. Within these fields, there was strong consensus about the importance of these outcomes. A second group, comprised of faculty members in business administration, engineering and law, ideally would place less emphasis on these aspects of professional education but expressed notable lack of consensus about the proper emphasis. Faculty members from programs in architecture, journalism, pharmacy and library science held some views in common with one or both of these groups but did not belong to either. The views of professional education outcomes did not differ according to the type of institution where the faculty members taught.

6. When asked about discussions within their programs, faculty members reported surprisingly little current debate on educational issues. In general, the extent of curricular debate reported was unrelated to the extent to which faculty members believe various influences affect their programs. Currently, however, of the ten professional programs surveyed, faculty members in education and pharmacy report the greatest amount of curricular debate.

7. In all professional fields, "teacher" was viewed as the role of greatest importance and occupied the greatest portion of faculty time. Frequently, this role was linked with an orientation toward professional practice. In research institutions, however, the scholarly role assumed a greater importance for faculty members than in non-research institutions.

NUMBER OF FACULTY SURVEYED IN VARIOUS PROF. PREP. PROGRAMS



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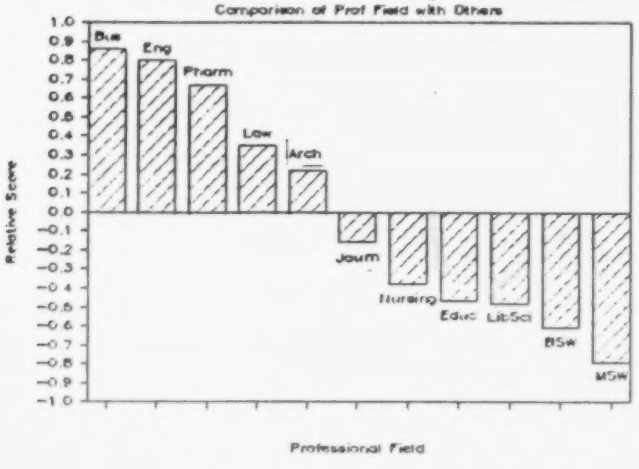
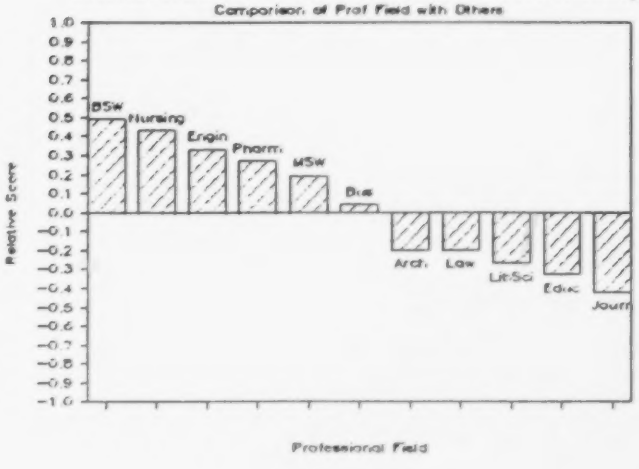
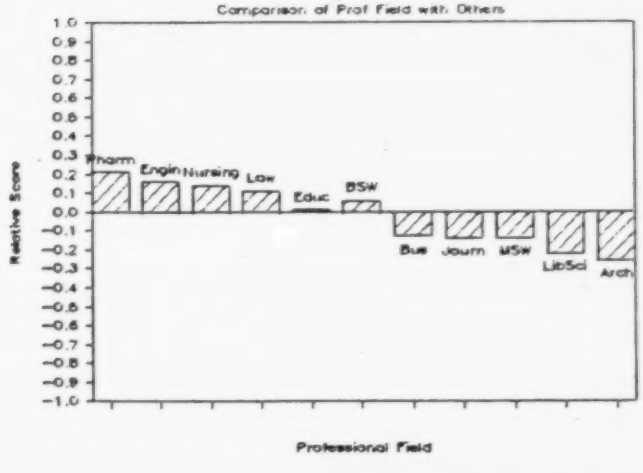
Influence of Society on Field



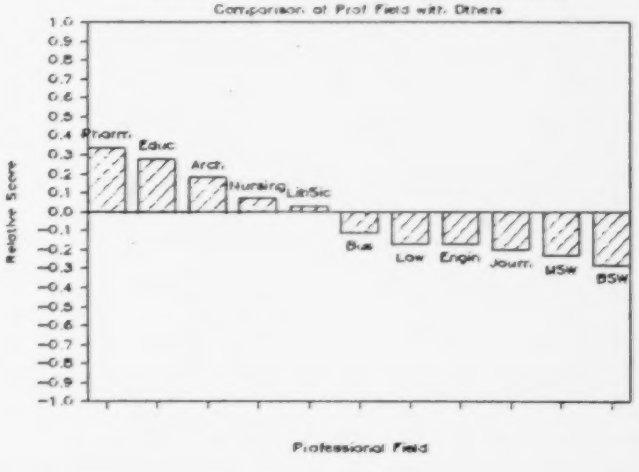
Influence of Professional Community



University Influences



Extent of Curricular Debate



AMPLIFICATION OF KEY FINDINGS

The guiding framework of the survey included several types of influences on professional preparation that may affect educational programs. These sets of influences were: 1) external influences, from society or the professional community; 2) intraorganizational influences, from within the university but from outside the professional program; and 3) internal influences. Faculty perceptions of these three types of influences on the professional program differed by field.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES -- SOCIETAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

The set of potential external influences on each professional program examined included: rewards, jobs, media image, federal policies, state policies, private policies, government funding, private funding and licensing. Faculty within professional fields differed in the extent to which they believed that these factors were influential.

* Respondents from all professions tended to view government and private funding as not too supportive for their field.

* Differences in perceived support from the private sector were substantial. Only 11.7% of the education faculty believe that the private sector is supportive; 79% of the business adminstration faculty believe that it is supportive.

* Faculty views in professional programs differed most concerning the adequacy of rewards to graduates, the availabilty of entry level jobs and the image of the profession portrayed by the media. In law and business, 90% and 83% respectively, of the faculty members felt the rewards society provides to graduates of professional programs were ample. In contrast, only 3% to 11% of the faculty in education, nursing, library science, architecture and social work felt the same. In many of these same fields, faculty felt that the media did not present a very positive view of their profession.

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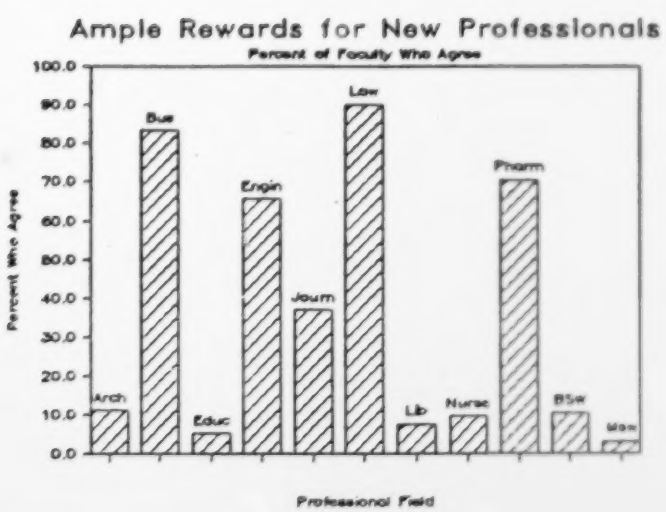
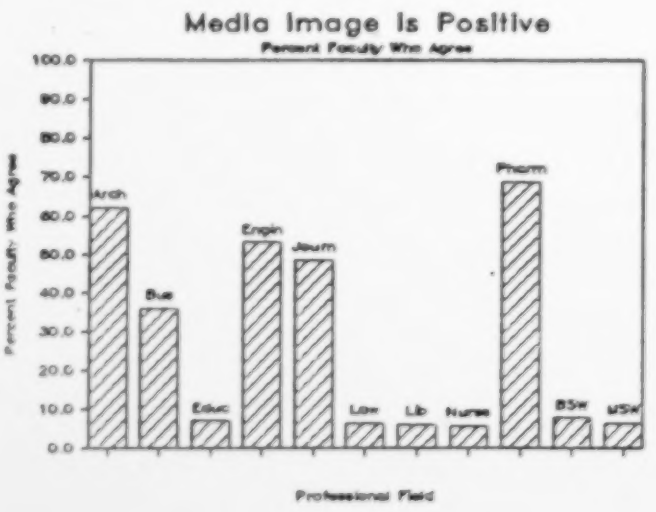
Professional field faculty were asked about eight different potential professional community influences, including knowledge consensus, availablity of practice settings, accrediting rigor, certification standards, control of the number of graduates, agreement on ethical codes, publications and alumni influence.

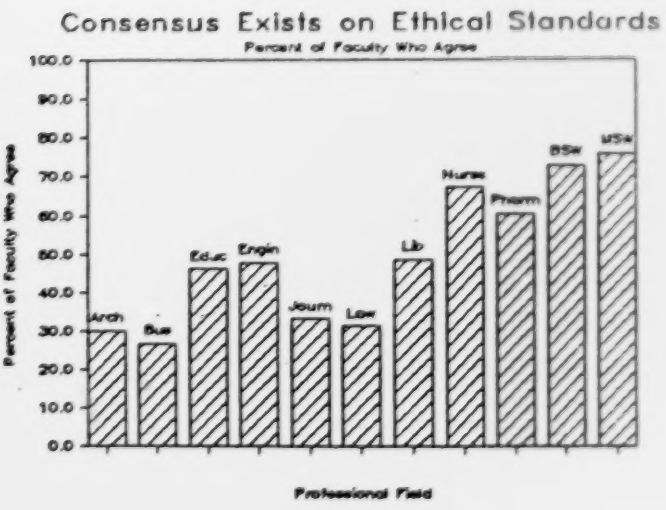
* Very few faculty in any field felt that the professional community controls the number of new professionals.

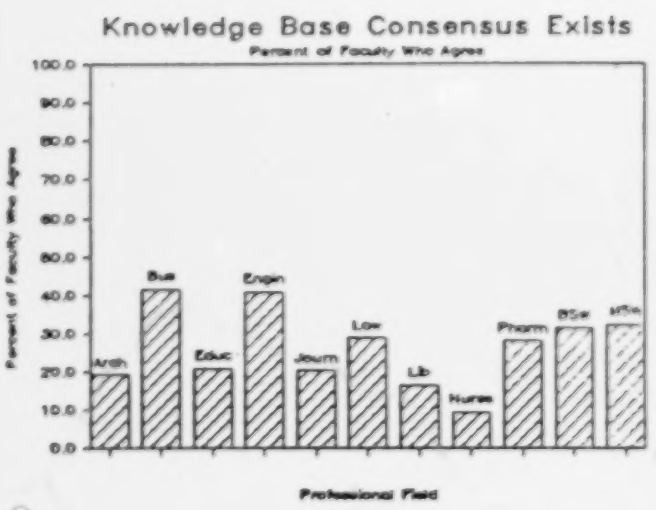
* The accrediting process was seen as the most influential factor among professional community influences.

* Bachelor of social work and nursing programs perceive the professional community influence as strongest while education and journalism programs perceive it to be weakest.





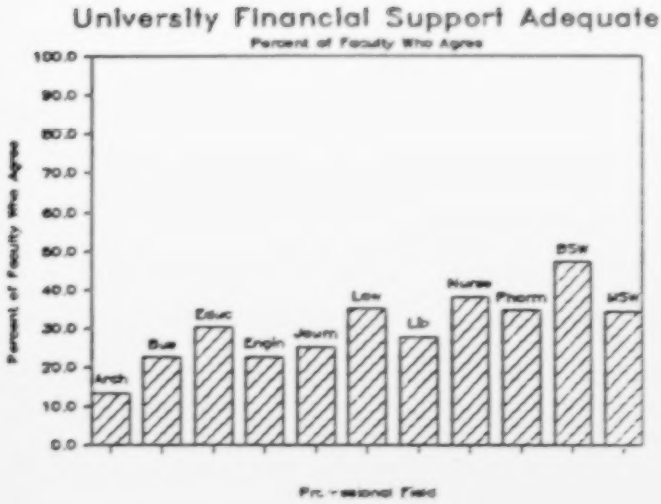


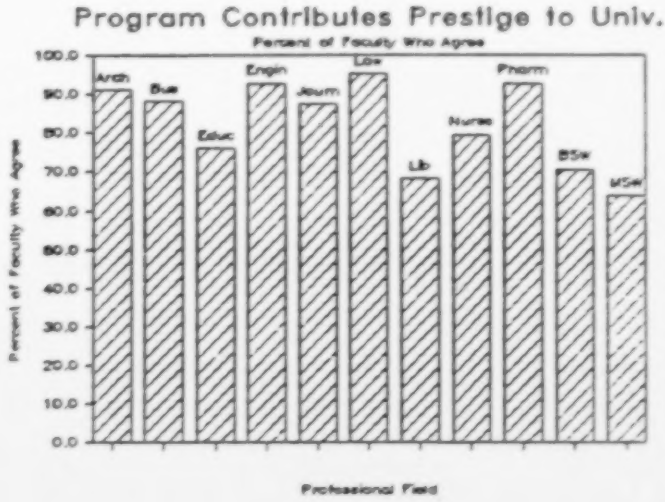


UNIVERSITY INFLUENCES

University influences to which professional faculty responded in the survey include: centrality of the program to the university, interconnectedness with other programs, financial support provided by the university, facilitative governance within the university, income generation of the program for the university and prestige contribution of the program to the university. There was less difference among fields in perceived university influence than was found for external and professional community influences.

* Most faculty believe their program contributes prestige to the university.
* More than other fields, faculty in law, engineering and pharmacy more strongly believe their programs are seen within the university as central and prestigious.
* Faculty perceptions of university financial support are generally low. Less than 50% of faculty in any field saw university support as adequate.





INTERNAL INFLUENCES

The intensity of curricular debate was used to measure the importance of internal influences. Faculty were asked to what extent they were discussing: instructional methodology, balance of theory and practice, the nature of field work, professional core courses, the content of foundational professional studies, the content of supporting studies, integration of professional and supporting coursework, program length, sequence of courses, program evaluation criteria, evaluation of students, admissions requirements, number of graduates and provision of continuing education. The extent of curriculum debate varied within fields as well as among fields.

* Social work faculty reported the least amount of curricular debate while the most extensive curricular debate was reported by faculty in education and pharmacy.

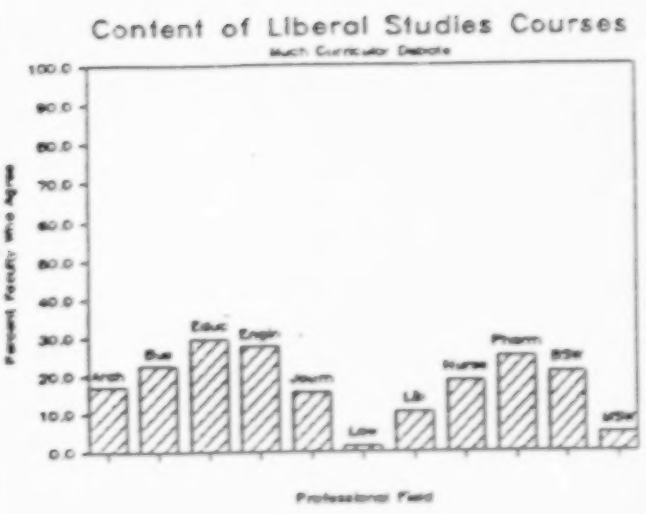
* The most active debates concern the balance of theory and practice, the content of core courses and student evaluation.

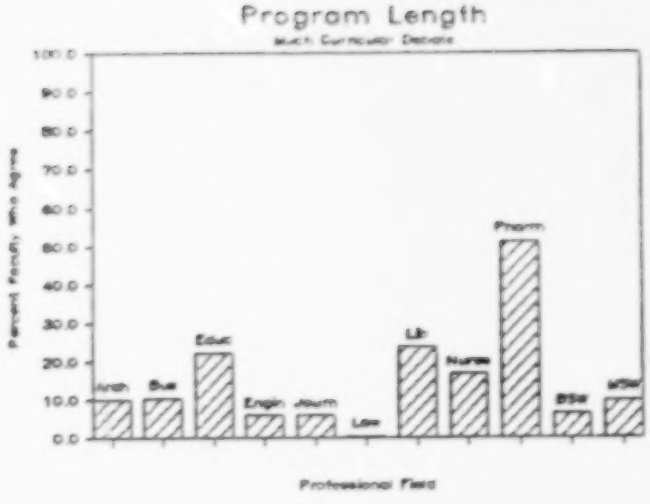
* Programs differ most on the extent to which they are debating program length; law faculty are discussing this minimally while the debate is more active in pharmacy, library science and education.

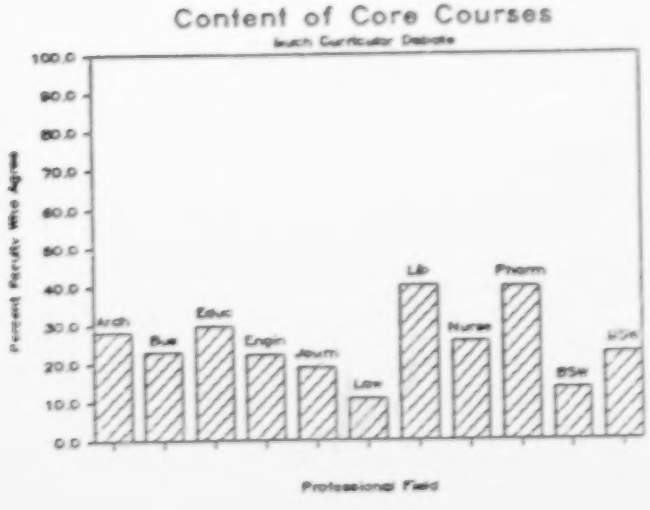
* There are substantial differences among fields with respect to debate on liberal studies. Law, social work and library science faculty are discussing this minimally, while education is pursuing discussion more actively.

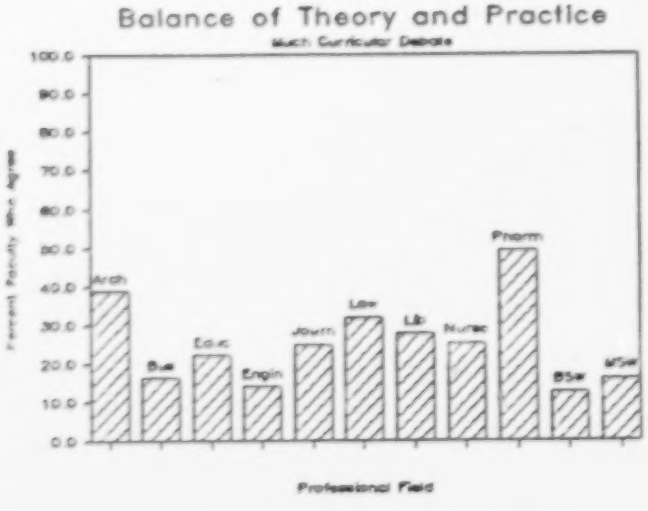
* In general, professional preparation programs are not debating how many new professionals should be graduated.

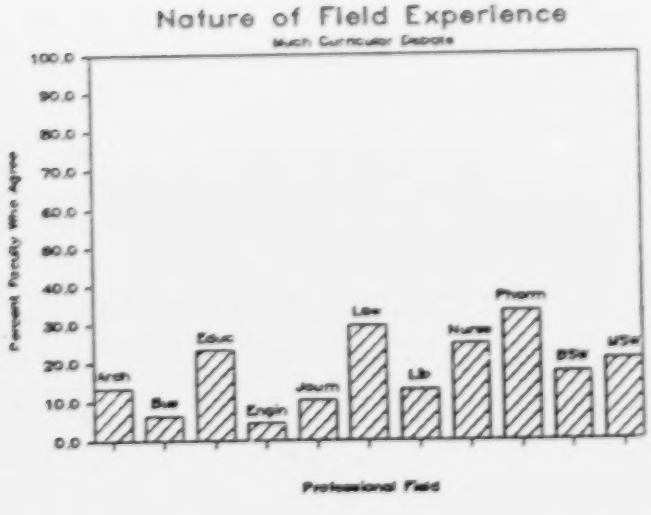
* Whether to provide continuing education and how to integrate related foundational courses from other fields are not active topics of discussion.

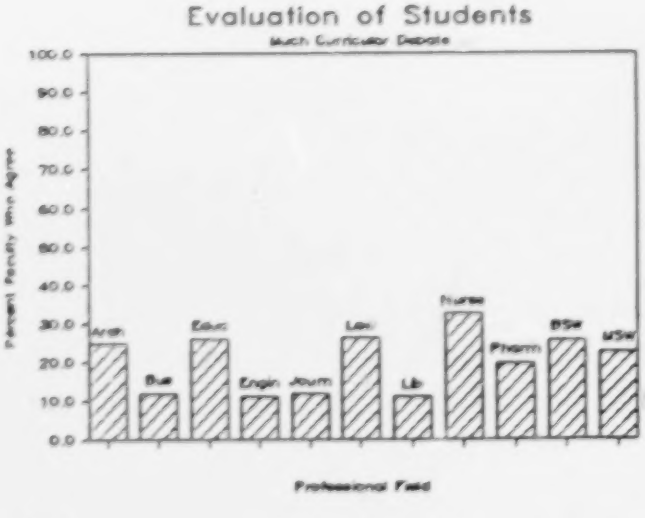

Content of Liberal Studies Courses
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW


Program Length
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW


Content of Core Courses
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW


Balance of Theory and Practice
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW


Nature of Field Experience
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW


Evaluation of Students
Much Curricular Debate
Percent Faculty Who Agree
Professional Field
Arch
Bus
Educ
Engin
Journ
Law
Lib
Nurse
Pharm
BSW
MSW

FACULTY

How the faculty members see their role in relation to the profession and to the professional preparation may influence the program. The roles preferred by faculty differ by professional field. In all fields, however, the teaching role was viewed as the role of greatest importance.

For faculty who are not administrators:

* Faculty members in law and library science are most likely to see themselves as scholars; the scholarly role is viewed as least important by faculty members in social work, journalism and education programs.
* Education and nursing faculty members most frequently see themselves as professional practitioners while law faculty members are far less likely to see themselves as practitioners.
* Administration and consulting generally are viewed as unimportant roles by faculty members in all fields.

For faculty who are currently adminstrators:

* Law and library science adminstrators remain most likely to view themselves as scholars.
* Faculty members in education and nursing continue to see the practitioner role as important.
* Adminstrators in education, nursing, social work and library science -- but not in law -- are likely to view consulting as an important role.

For faculty respondents in all fields, teaching occupies the greatest portion of working time, followed by administration, research and other roles.

Of the 1,294 faculty not reporting administrative roles:

* Education, nursing, journalism and undergraduate social work faculty reported spending over 70% of their time in teaching.

* The least time spent teaching (just under 60%) was reported by faculty members in law and pharmacy.

* Even though they may not hold an administrative title, faculty members generally tend to report that from 6% to 13% of their time is spent on administrative duties.

* The percentage of time faculty members reported spending on research varied from a low of 10% and 11.5% in nursing and undergraduate social work, respectively, to a high of 29% in law.

* In general, faculty did not spend over 10% of their working time in either independent practice or consulting.

Of the 936 faculty reporting administrative roles:

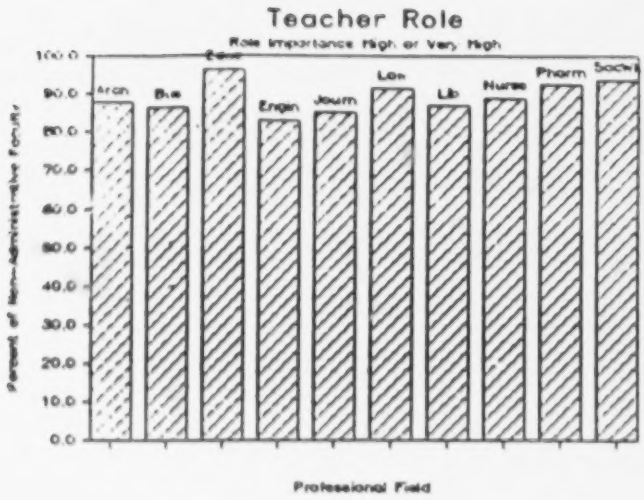
* Respondents reported that 35% to 55% of their time was devoted to the administrative role.

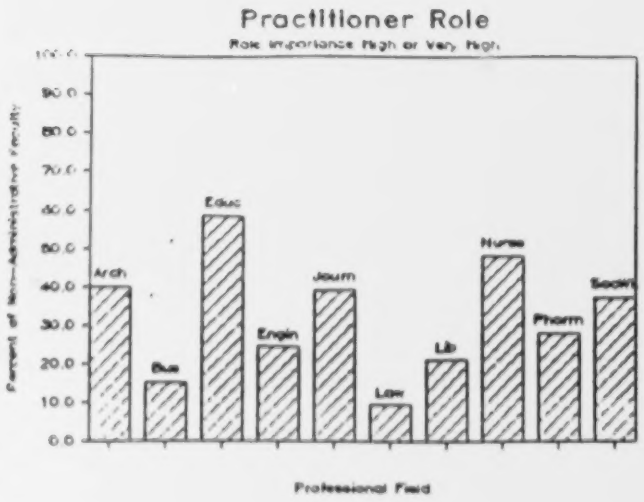
* Administrators in law and education appear to devote the greatest amount of time to administration while bachelor of social work and journalism faculty reported the least time.

The length of time faculty members have spent in various aspects of professional practice could be related to both faculty role preference and educational views.

* Education faculty members had spent the greatest average number of years (15) as full-time practitioners while pharmacy, law and business faculty members had practiced an average of 4-6 years.

* Architecture faculty were most likely to have continued for an average of nine years as part-time professional practitioners in their field while education and library science faculty members were quite unlikely to do so.





EDUCATIONAL VIEWS

Survey respondents were asked to respond to particular statements about the outcomes a professional program graduate should achieve. Eleven potential outcomes of professional preparation were identified and classified into two groups: 1) professional competences, and 2) professional attitudes. Respondents were asked to judge the extent to which each outcome: 1) ideally should be emphasized, 2) is emphasized in a typical program in their field, and 3) is emphasized in their own program.

IDEAL EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES

Generally, faculty members in all fields saw each of the professional outcomes as important but the ideal patterns of emphasis were somewhat distinctive for each field. Overall, professional competences were rated as deserving slightly more emphasis than professional attitudes.

- Understanding the professional knowledge base, integrating theory and practice, and developing good oral and written communication skills were competences judged as deserving the greatest emphasis by faculty in three or more fields.

* Demonstrating competence to anticipate and adapt to changes in society that affect the profession received the lowest emphasis rating from three fields -- law, engineering and architecture.

* Being competent to perform fundamental skills or tasks required in the profession received the lowest emphasis rating from five fields -- law, architecture, business, engineering and library science.

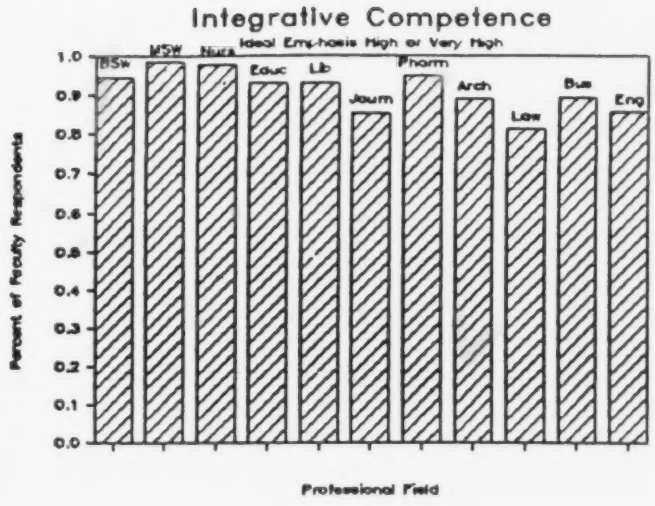
* Among the competences rated, the greatest variation of mean responses across fields was found for emphasis on fundamental skills and understanding the context in which the profession is practiced.

* Among the professional attitudes, faculty members in all but two fields -- engineering and architecture -- believed the highest emphasis should be placed on knowing and applying professional ethics.

* Willingness to participate in research or other scholarly activities that improve the professional practice was judged of low importance for graduates in law, business, journalism and engineering. Even this lowest rated professional attitude, however, was viewed as considerably important in an ideal program of professional preparation.

* Among the attitudes, the fields differed most regarding the emphasis they would ideally place on developing a sense of professional identity and being willing to participate in scholarly activities to improve practice.

* Within their fields, faculty in social work, nursing, education and library science exhibited substantial agreement in their views of which professional outcomes should be emphasized. In contrast, faculty members in law, business, pharmacy and engineering expressed diverse views even within their fields.


Integrative Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
1.0
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
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BSW
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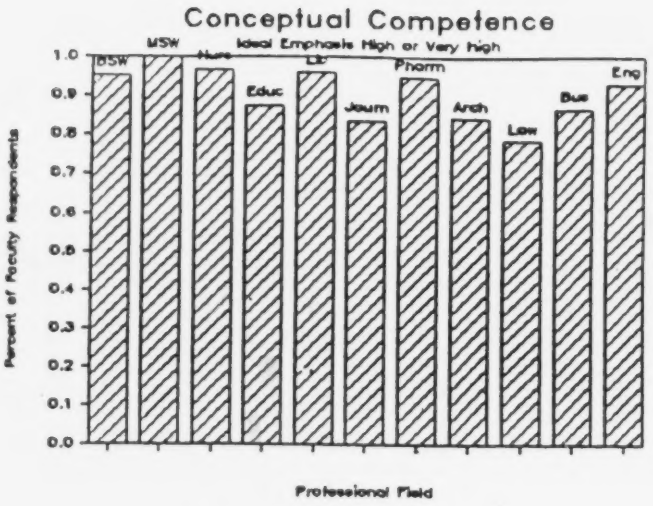
Professional Field


Conceptual Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
1.0
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
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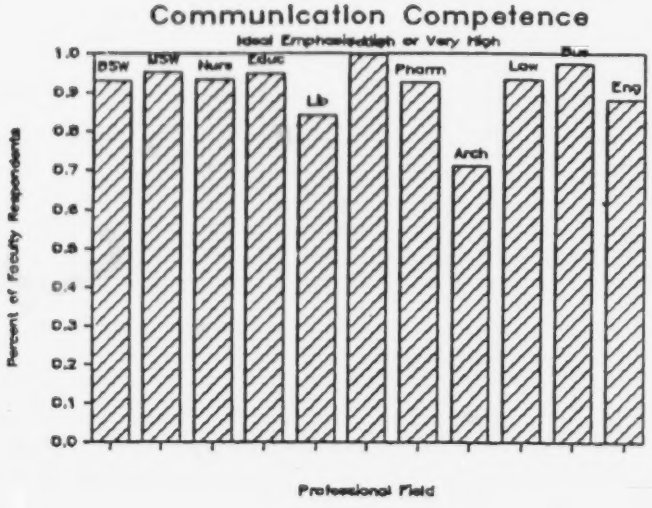
Communication Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
1.0
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
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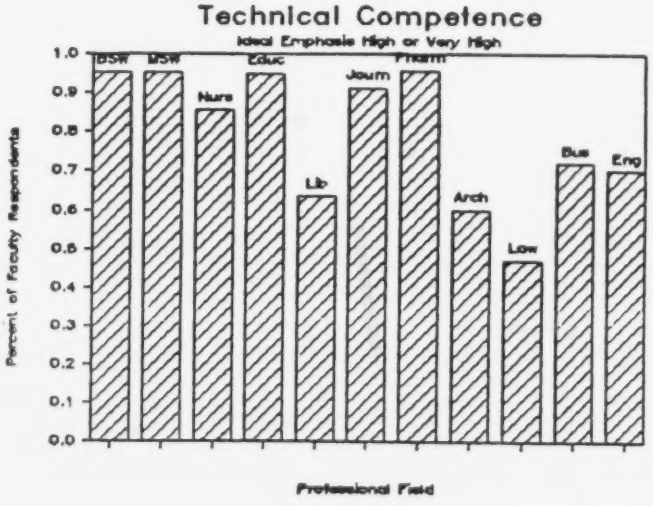
Technical Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
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0.9
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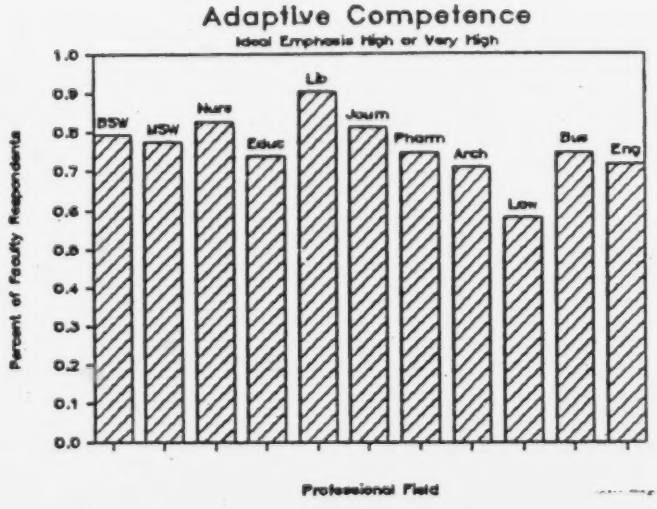
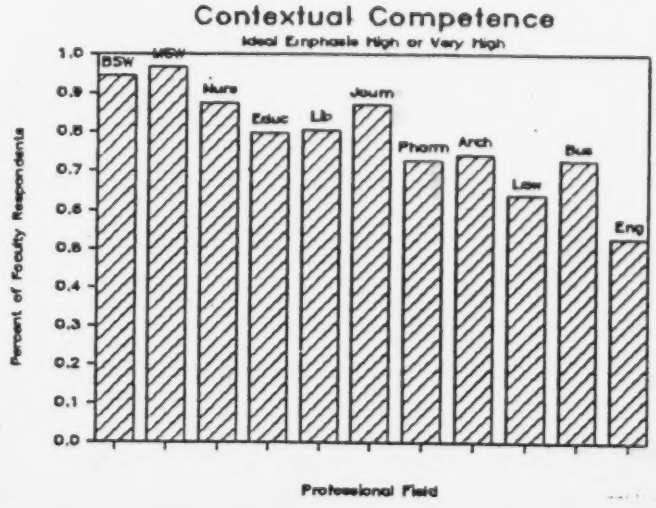

Adaptive Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
1.0
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
BSW
MSW
Nurs
Educ
Lib
Journ
Pharm
Arch
Law
Bus
Eng
Professional Field


Contextual Competence
Ideal Emphasis High or Very High
Percent of Faculty Respondents
1.0
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
BSW
MSW
Nurs
Educ
Lib
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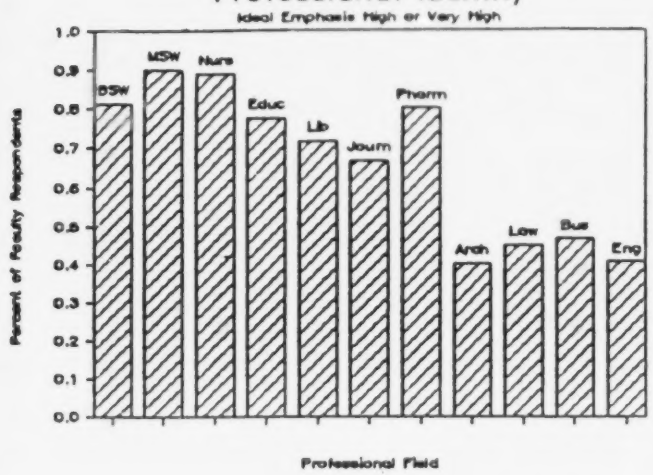
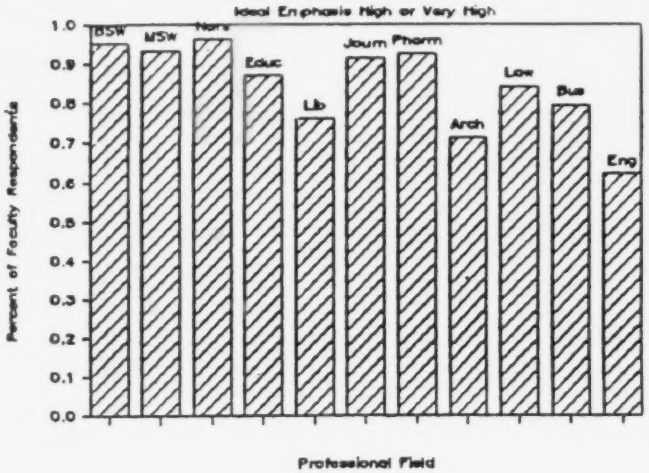
Pharm
Arch
Law
Bus
Eng
Professional Field

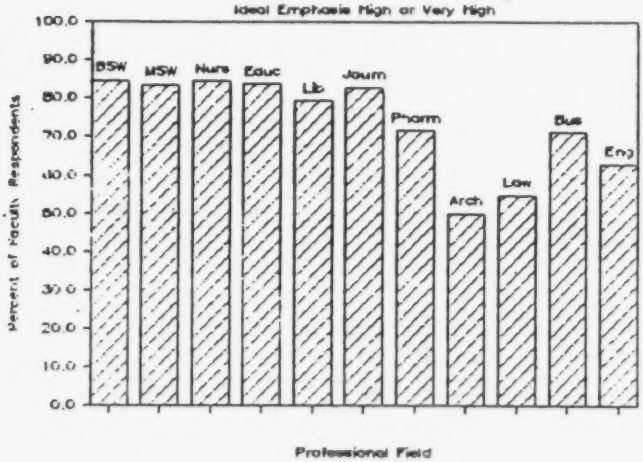
Professional Identity



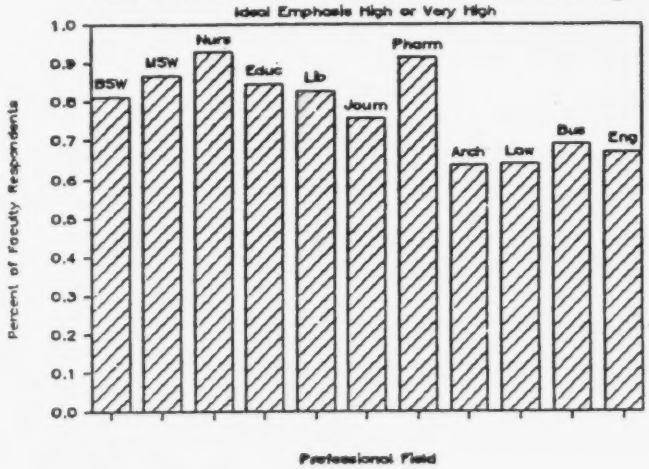
Professional Ethics



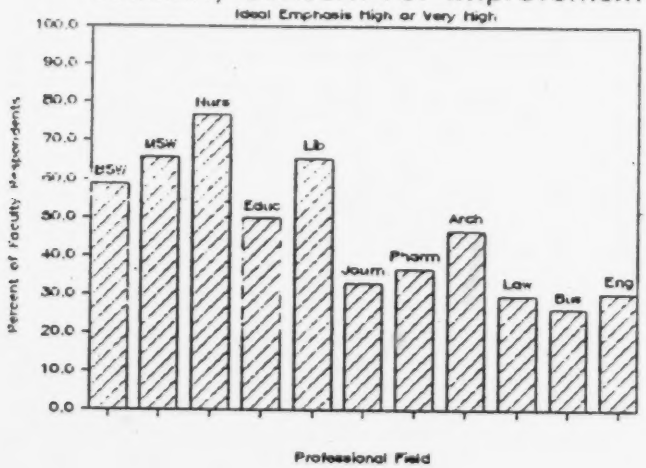
Career Marketability



Motivation for Continued Learning



Scholarly Concern For Improvement



FACULTY VIEWS OF TYPICAL PROGRAM EMPHASES AND EMPHASES WITHIN THEIR OWN PROGRAM

On the whole, professional program faculty felt that the typical program in their field devotes less emphasis than is ideal to each of the competences. Nonetheless, faculty generally believe their own program emphasizes each of the professional preparation outcomes somewhat more than is typical in their field.

* Faculty in most fields reported that their own program placed its greatest emphasis on the professional knowledge base and required skills and the least emphasis on adaptability to future changes. Exceptions were journalism where faculty felt the highest emphasis was given to communication competence and engineering where faculty felt that their own program placed lowest emphasis on understanding the context of professional practice.

* Faculty in eight fields felt that their programs placed high emphasis on career marketability. The exceptions were nursing and social work who indicated professional ethics received higher emphasis.

* Faculty in all fields, except engineering, believed that their program placed relatively low emphasis on scholarly concern for improvement of the profession.

* In the area of professional attitudes, the greatest diversity among fields was in attention paid to professional ethics and scholarly concern for professional improvement.

* Compared to those in nursing, social work, education, journalism, library science and pharmacy, faculty members in law, business and engineering believed that they placed less emphasis on professional attitudes in their programs.

Readers who are interested in more detail about the guiding framework for this survey, the methodology used and the results are referred to several forthcoming publications:

Stark, J. S., Lowther, M. A., Hagerty, B. M. K., and Orcyzk, C. "A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Preservice Professional Programs in Colleges and Universities." Journal of Higher Education, 57 (3), May/June, 1986 (forthcoming).

Stark, J. S., Lowther, M. A., and Hagerty, B. M. K. Outcomes of Professional Preparation. ERIC/ASHE Higher Education Reports. Washington: Association for the Study of Higher Education (forthcoming, summer 1986).

Stark, J. S., Lowther, M. A., and Hagerty, B. M. K. "Faculty Roles and Role Preferences in Ten Fields of Professional Study." Paper to be presented at the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco: April 16-20, 1986.

Stark, J. S., Lowther, M. A., and Hagerty, B. M. K. "Faculty Priorities for Student Competence in Ten Fields of Professional Study." Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. San Antonio: February 20-23, 1986.

Stark, J. S. "Liberal Education Outcomes of Professional Preparation." Division I Invited Address. To be presented at the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco: April 16-20, 1986.

Stark, J. S. "Liberal Education and Professional Programs: Conflict, Coexistence or Compatability?" Chapter forthcoming in Mary Ann Rehnke (ed.) Selecting Career Programs for College Campuses. New Directions for Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1986.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROJECT STAFF

Project Director: Joan S. Stark

Project Co-Director: Malcolm A. Lowther

Project Assistants: Daniel Alvarez (1985 - 86)
Ann Austin (1983)
Richard Bentley (1986)
Carol Freedman-Doan (1985)
Natalie Fisher (1985 - 86)
Michael Foss (1985)
Bonnie Hagerty (1983 - 86)
Philip Jones (1986)
Pamela Lokken (1985 - 86)
Cindy Orcyzk (1983 - 84)
Peter Rush (1984 - 85)
Jan Starr (1984 - 85)
Karen Swift (1984)

Project Secretary: Helen Candiotti